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THE MEMPHITE TOMB OF KING HAREMḤAB

BY

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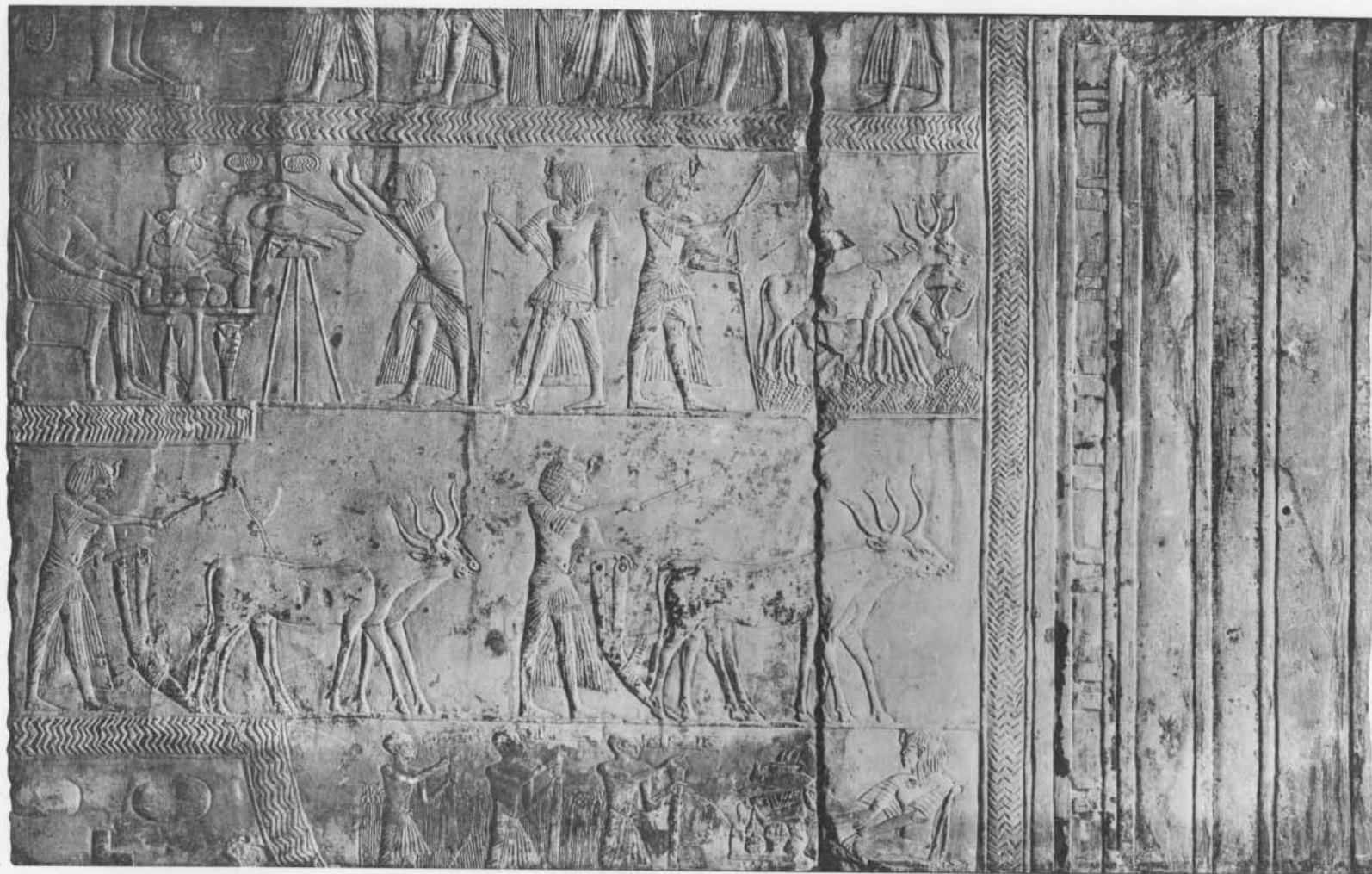
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HAREMḤAB IN THE FIELDS OF YALU

Bologna No. 1885

THE MEMPHITE TOMB OF KING HAREMḤAB

By JEAN CAPART

DURING the first years of the nineteenth century an admirable monument of Egyptian art was unfortunately demolished by the antiquity-hunters who devastated the ancient burial-grounds in order to satisfy the demands of certain Europeans, the accredited purveyors to the large museums: namely the Memphite tomb of General Haremḥab, who was destined to ascend the throne at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and whose royal tomb was discovered by Theodore Davis a few years ago in the valley of Bibân el-Mulūk at Thebes¹.

Various fragments of the Saḳḳārah tomb have found their way into European museums²: Leyden, London, Vienna and Bologna are in possession of pieces of it, identified chiefly through Breasted's researches³; the Cairo Museum has acquired several blocks that were discovered at Saḳḳārah itself by Mariette⁴. It seems that all hope of yet seeing the number of these fragments further increased is not vain, since, as will be shown, the Berlin Museum acquired a portion of a relief belonging to the same monument at Cairo in 1911.

In 1902, in the first volume of my *Recueil de Monuments Égyptiens*⁵, I drew attention to the technical perfection of the reliefs of Haremḥab preserved at Leyden, and expressed regret that nobody had thought of collecting them all in a single complete publication. Unfortunately, no one has been tempted to undertake this task; this is much to be regretted, for the photographic publication of the Leyden reliefs⁶, and of another in Bologna⁷ has sufficed to prove that no bas-relief of the New Kingdom except those of Tell el-Amarna can rival in perfection those of this Memphite tomb, the remains of which have been so deplorably scattered.

During a journey in Italy, in 1912, I had the opportunity of seeing at Bologna the fragment published by von Bissing, which depicts with extraordinary animation a band of negroes guarded by several Egyptians. My attention was also attracted to another fragment the provenance of which had been discovered by Breasted, and upon which is to be seen a representation of the Fields of Yalu, with Haremḥab occupied in tasks of husbandry. No photograph of this relief has been published until now (Pl. V). I asked myself how it was possible for Egyptologists who have studied the Bologna Museum not to have thought of connecting with the same series the four other blocks bearing the numbers 1886 (two fragments fitting together), 1888 and 1889 in Kminek-Szedlo's catalogue⁸ (Pls. VI—VII). A quite

¹ Theodore M. Davis' *Excavations: Biban el Molouk. The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatankhamanou*. London, 1912.

² For a recent discussion, see MASPERO's account, *op. cit.*, 12—18.

³ BREASTED, *Ancient Records*, III, 3—12, gives the antecedent bibliography.

⁴ MARIETTE, *Monuments Divers*, Pls. 74—5, with MASPERO's text, pp. 25—6.

⁵ Text to Pls. XXXV—XXXVIII.

⁶ BOESER, *Die Denkmäler des neuen Reichs*, Pls. XXI—XXV.

⁷ VON BISSING, *Denkmäler ägypt. Sculptur*, Pl. LXXXI a.

⁸ *Museo Civico di Bologna: Catalogo di antichità egizie*, Turin, 1895, 170—1. The piece representing the group of negroes, published by von Bissing, is in sunk relief, while the other fragments, including the Fields of Yalu, are in ordinary relief. Of the Leyden scenes, also, one is in simple, the other in sunk relief. We thus see that the two methods were used side by side in Haremḥab's tomb.

superficial examination of these bas-reliefs, and a comparison of them with those in the Leyden Museum, suffice to show how great are the stylistic analogies which they present. In both places the figures show identical features in the drawing of clothes and hair, features which appear but rarely in other monuments.

The four blocks just mentioned were acquired by the Bologna Museum at the same time as the scene of the Fields of Yalu and the group of negroes. These all come from the collection of Pelagio Palagi. One among them has deservedly attracted attention since the first generation of Egyptologists by the unusual representation of a horseman. Rosellini reproduced it in his *Monumenti Civili*¹. An Italian archaeologist, Zardetti, also published it in an article which appeared in 1835². It is said there that the Palagi collection was founded by J. Nizzoli, Chancellor of the Austrian Consulate at Cairo, and that the bas-relief with the horseman had apparently been discovered, according to Nizzoli's statement, in one of the catacombs of Thebes³. I wonder whether it is this vague indication of a Theban origin which has up to now prevented the attribution of this relief to the tomb of Haremhab. It is interesting to note that a Theban source had also been erroneously ascribed to another fragment undoubtedly belonging to this tomb. Breasted, as is well known, made the important discovery that the Vienna fragment joins one of the Leyden blocks. But when von Bergmann published the text of the Vienna monument⁴ he stated positively that it came from the wall of a Theban tomb. It would be interesting to know whence the Vienna Museum obtained this fragment. I suspect that it may have belonged to the Chancellor of the Austrian Consulate, Nizzoli, and have come from those hauls whence the Palagi collection received, as we have seen, the series of reliefs with which we are dealing. We must not forget, however, that the fragments of the tomb of Haremhab were divided among various amateurs; the Leyden reliefs, for example, came from the Humbert and Cimba collections. In his history of the Egyptian collection at Vienna⁵, Alexander Dedekind confines himself to mentioning the acquisition of the fragment by the Austrian collection during 1873. I do not think, therefore, that we need take the information in Zardetti's brochure seriously; it does not seem to be any more authentic than that given by von Bergmann, in almost identical terms, about a fragment of a relief which exactly fitted the remains of a wall of Haremhab's tomb at Saqqarah.

As long as the Theban origin is not proved, there is nothing to prevent us from considering the Bologna fragments nos. 1886, 1888 and 1889 as belonging to the same tomb. I have just said that the similarities of style are striking, and that they have convinced me that all these pieces really belonged to one whole. It will be seen that another student had already been struck by these similarities, without however being in a position to draw the necessary deductions from them.

In May 1919, H. Schäfer published the fragment of a bas-relief bought at Cairo in 1911 by the Berlin Museum⁶. The author observes, and rightly, that "it is one of the most attractive and remarkable among the most beautiful and instructive reliefs of the New

¹ Pl. CXX.

² *Lettera sopra due antichi monumenti egiziani posseduti dal Cav. pittore ed architetto Pelagio Palagi*. Milan, 1835, Pl. III.

³ *Op. cit.*, 5 and 20.

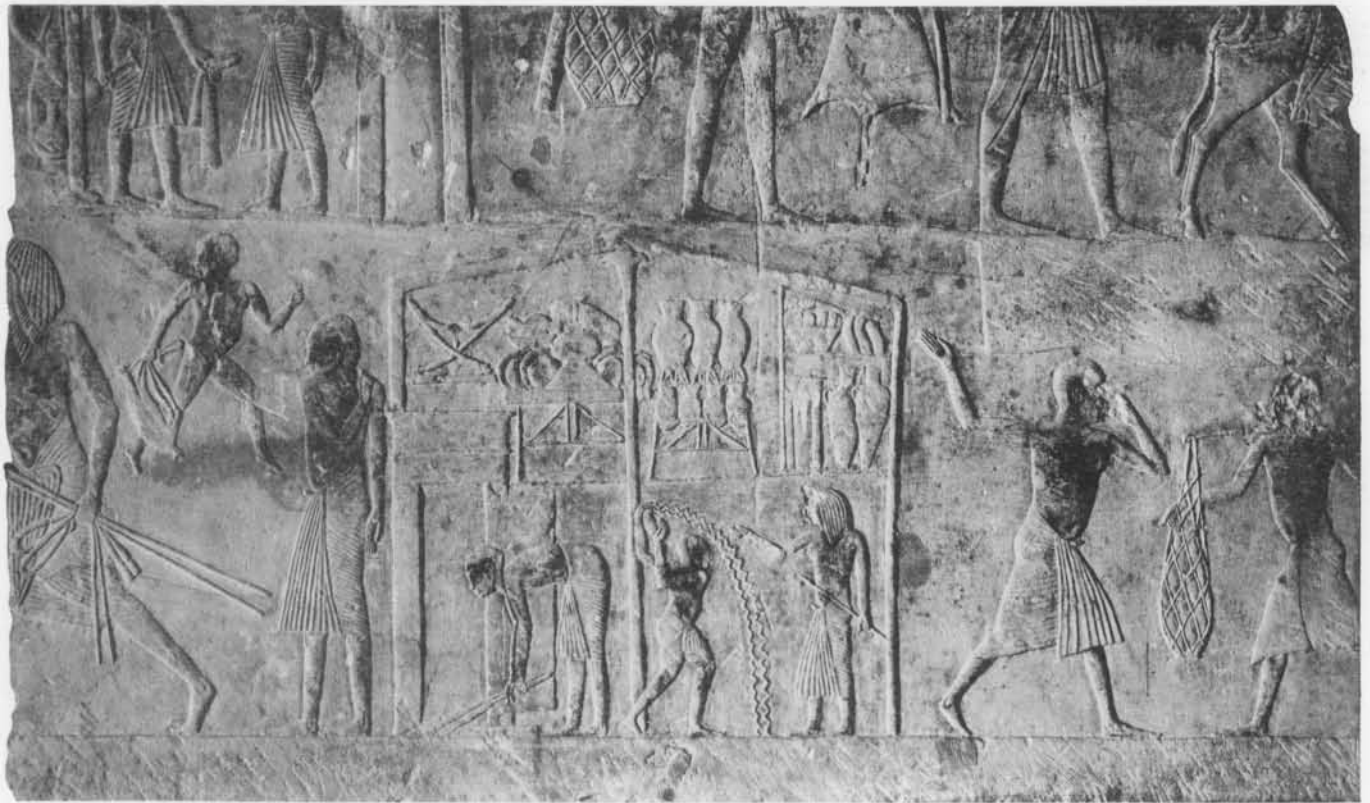
⁴ *Zeitschr. f. äg. Sprache*, 27, 126-7.

⁵ *Geschichte der kaiserlichen Sammlung alter ägyptischen Objekte in Wien*, Vienna, 1907, 26.

⁶ *Aus einem ägyptischen Kriegslager*, in the *Ämtliche Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XL, no. 8, 154.



Bologna No. 1889



Bologna No. 1888

RELIEFS ATTRIBUTED TO THE TOMB OF HAREMḤAB

Kingdom." Schäfer, after a very minute study, thought that the Berlin fragment must be ascribed to the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the epoch of Amenophis III, "an epoch which already contained in embryo all the art of Amenophis IV." Nevertheless, he adds in a note that his colleague G. Möller suspects a connection with the reliefs of Haremḥab's tomb at Leyden. This impression is extremely important to note: Möller has thus had the Leyden reliefs in mind. What would he have said if he had known that the Berlin fragment exactly fits the upper part of block no. 1888 in the Bologna Museum (see Fig. 1)?

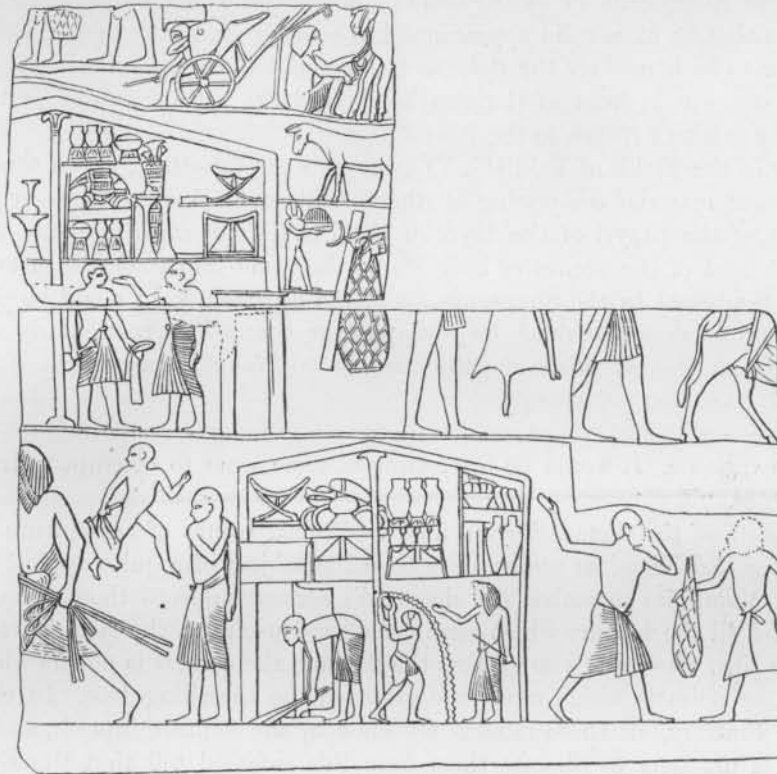


Fig. 1. Bologna 1888 + Berlin 20363.

He would have inferred from this that the Bologna blocks strangely resemble the fragments of Leyden, just as I remarked above.

Let us see if it is possible to point out some detail or other which will actually permit the fitting together, from the standpoint of artistic conception, of blocks nos. 1886, 1888 and 1889 at Bologna. It will be noticed in the drawing which shows the connection of block no. 1888 with the Berlin one, that one part of the scenes was arranged, not in regular and parallel registers, but along sinuous lines, evidently with intent to give the impression of a hilly landscape. This is exactly what fragment no. 1889 with the horseman shows us. Further, on fragment no. 1888 there is, to the left of the lower register, a little naked running figure, carrying an empty water-skin. The draughtsman has placed it high up in the field, without any ground-line for its feet to stand on; exactly the same arrangement is found with two figures on fragment no. 1886.

I do not think it necessary to describe minutely and at length the very animated scenes which the several Bologna blocks offer us. May it not be hoped that, attention

having been drawn to them, yet further fragments fitting these may be discovered, so that we may then form a more precise idea of the artist's intention? I confess that the examination of as much as we already possess does not seem to me to confirm the impression of Schäfer, who judged exclusively from the Berlin fragment. I do not believe that a military camp is represented. May not the buildings be interpreted as schematic representations of houses? The arrangement of the door on the Bologna block, at all events, seems to me to indicate an edifice of a more permanent kind than a military tent. If the representations of the Palace of Amenophis IV in the tomb of Meryrē^c at Tell el-Amarna be referred to¹, it will be seen that no more solid appearance has been given to the royal dwelling than to what I believe to be houses on the Bologna relief completed by the Berlin fragment. The waterer and sweeper in front of the threshold recall the little fresco of Tell el-Amarna, celebrating the master's return to the house².

The scene of the Fields of Yalu (Pl. V) deserves a careful study, which should be illustrated by copious material comprising all the variants made known to us by tomb-reliefs and vignettes of the papyri of the Book of the Dead. The style does not seem to me identical with that of the scenes of civil life in the same tomb. Other instances of this difference of treatment in the representation of the Fields of Yalu could be cited; in the tomb of Paatenemḥab at Leyden³, for example, the contrast is particularly striking. It may be questioned whether this is not the result of the draughtsman's copying the vignette of a summarily executed manuscript.

I have always been surprised to notice that every different representation of the Fields of Yalu offers variants. It would be interesting at some time to attempt to trace them to a few archetypes.

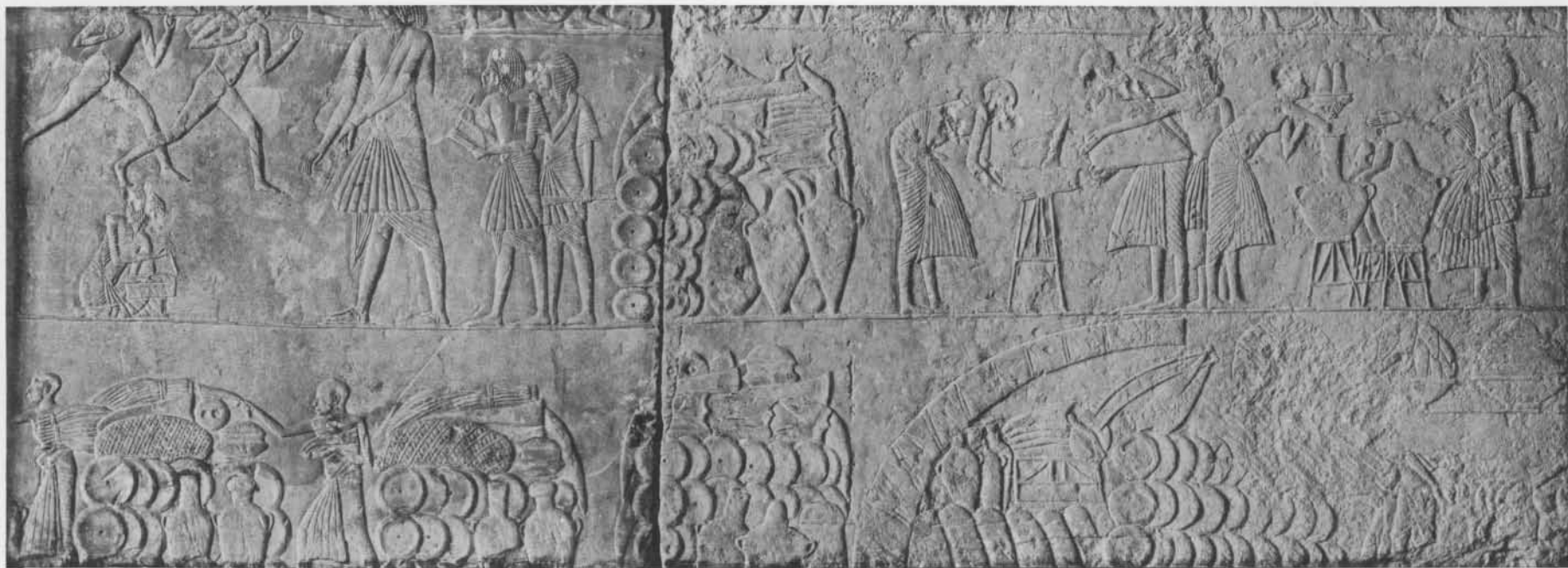
The elements of the theme, derived from traditional scenes of agriculture abundantly known from the Old Kingdom tombs, have been the subject of a quite typical transformation. In the Memphite mastabas the deceased's servants devote themselves, under the master's eye, to all the labours which were considered useful to the latter's well-being. It is not he who tills, who sows, who gathers the flax and the corn, it is not he who maintains the work of the animals which crush the grain on the threshing-floor. In the Fields of Yalu, on the contrary, all these labours are done by the defunct himself, assisted by his wife; and it is precisely to liberate them from this enforced toil that the Egyptians resorted to the use of the funerary statuettes known as "Ushabtis." It will be noticed that the Bologna relief shows us three servants occupied in gathering flax under the eye of the seated Ḥaremḥab. We have here a feature worthy of attention; I have not found it in any of the papyrus-vignettes. I may recall in this connection a very curious fragment of a relief which comes, as it so happens, from a Memphite tomb of the New Kingdom⁴. There may be seen the High Priest of Ptah, Meryptah, devoting himself to agricultural labour in company with his servants. He flings with full hands the grain which he has taken from a sack held out to him by one of his servants. Behind the latter six others break up the ground with hoes. It is just the sowing-sack of this type and these agricultural implements which form part of the usual equipment of the Ushabtis. It would be very interesting

¹ DAVIES, *El Amarna*, Part I, Pls. XVIII and XXVI.

² PETRIE, *Tell el Amarna*, Pl. IV.

³ BOESER, *op. cit.*, Pls. I—XII.

⁴ WIEDEMANN-PÖRTNER, *Aegyptische Grabreliefs aus der grossherzoglichen Altertümersammlung zu Karlsruhe*, Strassburg, 1906, Pl. VII.



RELIEF ATTRIBUTED TO THE TOMB OF HAREMHAB

Bologna No. 1886

